



KŪKULU KE EA A KANALOA

KAHO'OLawe ISLAND RESERVE COMMISSION

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NEWS RELEASE

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SOL KAHO'OHALAHALA NAMED EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF KIRC

KIRC Commissioners Appoint Hawaiian Community Leader to Direct Agency Reorganization and Restoration Initiatives on Kaho'olawe

Honolulu, HI, December 29, 2004—The Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission (KIRC) announced today that State House Representative Sol Kaho'ohalahala has been selected to fulfill the responsibilities of Executive Director of the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission. Kaho'ohalahala currently represents State House District 13, which includes Kaho'olawe, Molokini, Lāna'i, Moloka'i, Kalaupapa, Pā'ia, Ha'ikū, Ke'anae, Wailua, Nāhiku, Hāna, Kīpahulu and Kaupō.

Kaho'ohalahala began his political career in the Maui County Council in 1995 as the councilmember representing Lāna'i. He then served two terms (1998-2000, 2002-2004) in the State House of Representatives and was re-elected this year. During the recent reorganization of the House, Kaho'ohalahala was appointed Chair of the House Committee on Hawaiian Affairs.

Selection Qualifications

According to Dr. Emmett Aluli, Chair of the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission, "While the Commission was impressed with Kaho'ohalahala's political experience, the commissioners were even more impressed by his deep knowledge of and expertise in conserving and restoring the cultural and natural resources of Lāna'i."

Aluli added, “The flora and fauna, geology, soils, and environment of Lāna‘i closely resemble those of Kaho‘olawe. The restored dry-land forest at Kānepu‘u provides a vision of what we intend to accomplish on Kaho‘olawe through the KIRC's restoration efforts. Sol's experience with the Nature Conservancy in the conservation and restoration of Kānepu‘u will prove extremely valuable in overseeing this restoration of Kaho‘olawe.”

The Commission also envisions the restoration of Kaho‘olawe as a training center in the traditional arts of navigation and trans-pacific wayfinding," said Aluli. "Kaho‘ohalahala's participation on many of the Hōkūle‘a voyages provided him the ideal background necessary to work with the voyaging community to re-establish Kaho‘olawe as a modern-day training center for long-distance voyaging."

Aluli also noted, "Representative Kaho‘ohalahala brings with him a network of community and agency contacts on the neighboring islands of Lāna‘i, Moloka‘i, and Maui, which will prove important in developing the support and respect for the protection and restoration of the island and the marine resources within the two-mile ocean boundary of the reserve."

Sol Kaho‘ohalahala’s Background

Representative Kaho‘ohalahala was born and raised on Lāna‘i, sister island to Kaho‘olawe, and recalled, "As children, growing up on Lāna‘i, we would feel the earth shake, hear the windows rattle and see the explosions at night during military exercises across the channel on Kaho‘olawe." As a young man, Kaho‘ohalahala became involved in the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana and the effort to stop the military bombing the island and has remained an active member of the organization for 28 years.

Dr. Noa Emmett Aluli, Chair of the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission and founding member of the Protect Kaho‘olawe ‘Ohana, noted how Sol and his wife Lynn organized the Lāna‘i kūpuna and young leaders and encouraged them to become involved. Throughout the years working with the kūpuna on his home island, Kaho‘ohalahala gained recognition as the leading expert on the history and natural and cultural resources of Lāna‘i.

Aluli recalled, "I remember that they first paddled over on a canoe from Lāna‘i to Honokanai‘a Bay to protest the Navy bombing and military exercises on Kaho‘olawe. Sol, who is also a talented artist, helped us design our newsletters and brochures."

Kaho‘ohalahala’s Vision for Kaho‘olawe

Kaho‘ohalahala explained his approach to the role of executive director, saying, "My vision is to increase public awareness and support for the next phase of Kaho‘olawe’s restoration. We have an opportunity to do something extremely positive with the island. Ideas for island living and sustainability will be proposed, developed and implemented. Alternative and renewable energy can be explored and integrated. Educational programs related to cultural practices and environmental management will also be expanded and further developed.

Kaho‘ohalahala added, "With aloha ‘āina as our guiding principle, we can blend traditional Hawaiian wisdom and practices with today’s technology to address the challenges faced in restoring the island. And we will share what we learn with Kaho‘olawe’s sister islands. In keeping with the Commission’s mandate, we will prepare a foundation for self-governance for the Hawaiian people with aloha as its essence. Finally, we must develop and initiate a sustainable financial plan to support and fund these programs and ideas over the long term."

Kaho‘ohalahala will resign his seat in the House of Representatives, as required by state law, to take on the responsibilities of Executive Director of the Kaho‘olawe Island Reserve Commission. He stated, "My role representing the people of District 13 has been extremely rewarding and I will miss working on their behalf in the legislature. Only an opportunity like the position the Commission is offering me could make me leave. However, I don’t see my new role as stepping away from the public service I have provided my constituents. Instead, I look on it as a chance to expand my service to a larger constituency -- the Hawaiian community and all the people of Hawai‘i -- by taking on responsibility for restoring the sacred island of Kaho‘olawe."

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